Noriega May Face Panama Charges

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PANAMA CITY—Panama may ask the United States to extradite Manuel Antonio Noriega to face possible charges in a second murder case, the head of Panama's Supreme Court said.

Court President Carlos Lucas Lopez said Friday that Noriega, in a Florida prison awaiting trial on drug-trafficking charges, is suspected of involvement in the 1985 death of leftist opposition leader Hugo Spadafora.

Panama's attorney general earlier asked the Foreign Ministry to request Noriega's extradition to face charges in a homicide case involving Maj. Moises Giroldi, who attempted a coup against Noriega's rule in October 1989.

The judge said the court has decided to hear charges against Noriega in the Spadafora case and could solicit Noriega's extradition from the United States.

Spadafora was killed and decapitated along the Panama-Costa Rica border. His attackers were never caught. Then-President Nicolas Ardito Barletta in 1985 refused to open an inquiry into the case.